

under the Balanced Budget Act. While some of the changes under the Balanced Budget Act were good, some of the changes are now negatively impacting Medicare beneficiaries.

I have heard from many constituents regarding home health care changes under the Balanced Budget Act and the various regulations that HCFA has imposed. In fact, last year, I received some 1500 letters from both home health care providers and beneficiaries. I echo their concerns when I say that the interim payment system penalizes cost efficient home health providers, like those in Michigan, while rewarding higher cost agencies.

Not only does the IPS penalize agencies that attempted to keep their costs down in 1994, but the new regulations which HCFA has imposed on the agencies are quite burdensome. There is no more poignant story to demonstrate the undue burdens being placed on home health care providers than that of Linda Stock, a Michigan home health care provider. This month Ms. Stock testified before the PSI Subcommittee about the problems that home care providers were having, particularly cost efficient home care providers like her own. Last week Ms. Stock called to let me know that she has resigned from her job because she did not feel that she could ask her staff to implement regulations such as OASIS (Outcome and Assessment Information Set) and the 15 minute incremental home health reporting requirement. It is tragic that a committed health care provider such as Linda Stock would feel the need to resign from her job rather than implement regulations which she believed were unfair to both beneficiaries and providers.

So what can be done in the face of these problems? I believe that the bill we are introducing today, if enacted, could go a long way towards helping Ms. Stock and others like her.

Last year I worked on a bill with Senator COLLINS to revise the payment formula used to calculate the per beneficiary limit. That bill would have created new winners and losers under the IPS. This year's bill does not attempt to revise the formula, and therefore avoids the formula fight which made action on this issue so difficult last year. Our new bill makes needed adjustments to the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 and related federal regulations.

Though technical in nature, I would like to read the major provisions found in the bill:

(1) The bill will eliminate the automatic 15 per cent reduction in Medicare home health payments now scheduled for October 1, 2000.

(2) The bill will provide supplemental payments to home health agencies on a patient by patient basis if the cost of care for an individual is considered by the Secretary to be significantly higher than average due to the patient's particular health and functional condition.

(3) The bill will increase the per beneficiary cost limit for agencies with limits below the national average to the national average cost per patient over a three year period or until the Medicare home health prospective payment system is implemented.

(4) The bill will revise the surety bond requirement for home health agencies to more appropriately target fraud

(5) The bill will extend the IPS overpayment recoupment period to three years without interest

(6) The bill will eliminate the 15 minute incremental reporting period

(7) The bill temporarily maintains the Periodic Interim Payment (PIP) program, a program that permits HCFA to make payments to agencies based on historical payment levels—prior to the final settlement of claims and cost reports.

I believe that this bill provides an opportunity for us to move forward in solving some of the problems caused by the Balanced Budget Act. We should pass this common sense bill that will ensure that home care is accessible to those seniors who so desperately need it.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, June 30, 1999, the federal debt stood at \$5,638,780,248,334.54 (Five trillion, six hundred thirty-eight billion, seven hundred eighty million, two hundred forty-eight thousand, three hundred thirty-four dollars and fifty-four cents).

One year ago, June 30, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,547,935,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred forty-seven billion, nine hundred thirty-five million).

Five years ago, June 30, 1994, the federal debt stood at \$4,645,802,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred forty-five billion, eight hundred two million).

Ten years ago, June 30, 1989, the federal debt stood at \$2,799,923,000,000 (Two trillion, seven hundred ninety-nine billion, nine hundred twenty-three million).

Twenty-five years ago, June 30, 1974, the federal debt stood at \$476,006,000,000 (Four hundred seventy-six billion, six million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,162,774,248,334.54 (Five trillion, one hundred sixty-two billion, seven hundred seventy-four million, two hundred forty-eight thousand, three hundred thirty-four dollars and fifty-four cents) during the past 25 years.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in the executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate

messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:01 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hanrahan, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 66. An act to preserve the cultural resources of the Route 66 corridor and to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide assistance.

H.R. 592. An act to designate a portion of Gateway National Recreation Area as "World War Veterans park at Miller Field."

H.R. 791. An act to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the route of the War of 1812 British invasion of Maryland and Washington, District of Columbia, and the route of the American defense, for study for potential addition to the national trails systems.

H.R. 1218. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit taking minors across State lines in circumvention of laws requiring the involvement of parents in abortion decisions.

The message also announced that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 775) to establish certain procedures for civil actions brought for damages relating to the failure for civil actions brought for damages relating to the failure of any device or system to process or otherwise deal with the transition from the year 1999 to the year 200, and for other purposes.

At 6:45 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hanrahan, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House insists upon its amendment to the bill (S. 1059) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2000 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes, disagreed to by the Senate, and agrees to the conference asked by the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon; and appoints the following Members as the managers of the conference on the part of the Houses:

From the Committee on Armed Services; for consideration of the Senate bill and the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. SPENCE, Mr. STUMP, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. BATEMAN, Mr. HANSEN, Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania, Mr. HEFLEY, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. BUYER, Mrs. FOWLER, Mr. McHUGH, Mr. TALENT, Mr. EVERETT, Mr. BARLETT of Maryland, Mr. McKEON, Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. HOSTETTLER, Mr.

CHAMBLISS, Mr. HILLEARY, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. SISISKY, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. PICKETT, Mr. EVANS, Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. UNDERWOOD, Mr. REYES, Mr. TURNER, Ms. SANCHEZ, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. ANDREWS, and Mr. LARSON.

From the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, for consideration of matters within the jurisdiction of that committee under clause 11 of rule X: Mr. GOSS, Mr. LEWIS of California, and Mr. DIXON.

From the Committee on Banking and Financial Services, for consideration of section 1059 of the Senate bill, and section 1409 of the House bill, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. MCCOLLUM, Mr. BACHUS, and Mr. LAFALCE.

From the Committee on Commerce, for consideration of sections 326, 601, 602, 1049, 1050, 3151-53, 3155-3165, 3173, 3175, 3176-78 of the Senate bill, and sections 601, 602, 653, 3161, 3162, 3165, 3167, 3184, 3186, 3188, 3189, and 3191 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. BLILEY, Mr. BARTON of Texas, and Mr. DINGELL: *Provided*, That Mr. BILIRAKIS is appointed in lieu of Mr. BARTON of Texas for consideration of sections 326, 601, and 602 of the Senate bill, and sections 601, 602, and 653 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: *Provided further*, That Mr. TAUZIN is appointed in lieu of Mr. BARTON of Texas for considerations of sections 1049 and 1050 of the Senate bill, and modifications committed to conference.

From the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for consideration of sections 479 and 698 of the Senate bill, and sections 341, 343, 549, 567, and 673 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. GOODLING, Mr. DEAL of Georgia, and Mrs. MINK of Hawaii.

From the Committee on Government Reform, for consideration of sections 538, 652, 654, 805-810, 1004, 1052-54, 1080, 1101-07, 2831, 2862, 3160, 3161, 3163, and 3173 of the Senate bill, and sections 522, 524, 525, 661-64, 672, 802, 1101-05, 2802, and 3162 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. SCARBOROUGH, and Mr. CUMMINGS: *Provided*, That Mr. HORN is appointed in lieu of Mr. SCARBOROUGH for consideration of sections 538, 805-810, 1052-54, 1080, 2831, 2862, 3160, and 3161 of the Senate bill, and sections 802 and 2802 of the House amendment.

From the Committee on International Relations, for consideration of sections 1013, 1043, 1044, 1046, 1066, 1071, 1072, and 1083 of the Senate bill, and sections 1202, 1206, 1301-07, 1404, 1407, 1408, 1411, and 1413 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. GILMAN, Mr. BEREUTER, and Mr. GEJDENSON.

From the Committee on the Judiciary, for consideration of sections 3156 and 3163 of the Senate bill, and sections

3166 and 3194 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. HYDE, Mr. MCCOLLUM, and Mr. CONYERS.

From the Committee on Resources, for consideration of sections 601, 602, 695, 2833, and 2861 of the Senate bill, and sections 365, 601, 602, 653, 654, and 2863 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. TAUZIN, and Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California.

From the Committee on Science, for consideration of sections 1049, 3151-53, and 3155-65 of the Senate bill, and sections 3167, 3170, 3184, 3188-90, and 3191 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. CALVERT, and Mr. COSTELLO.

From the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for consideration of sections 601, 602, 1060, 1079, and 1080 of the Senate bill, and sections 361, 601, 602, and 3404 of the House amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. GILCHREST, and Mr. DEFazio.

From the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for consideration of sections 671-75, 681, 682, 696, 697, 1062, and 1066 of the Senate bill, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. QUINN, and Mr. FILNER.

The message also announced that the House disagrees to the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1905) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes, and agrees to the conference asked by the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses there; and appoints Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina, Mr. WAMP, Mr. LEWIS of California, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. MURTHA, Mr. HOYER, and Mr. OBEY, as the managers of the conference on the part of the House.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the first and second times and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 791. An act to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the route of the War of 1812 British invasion of Maryland and Washington, District of Columbia, and the route of the American defense, for study for potential addition to the national trails system.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

H.R. 1218. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit taking minors across State lines in circumvention of laws requiring the involvement of parents in abortion decisions.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with

accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-4035. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 the annual report for fiscal year 1998 relative to defense articles that were licensed for export under the Arms Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4036. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a human resources demonstration project at the Naval Research Laboratory; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-4037. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the Office of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration for the period October 1, 1998 through March 31, 1999; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-4038. A communication from the Chairman, Federal Housing Finance Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the management reports of the twelve Federal Home Loan Banks and the Financing Corporation for calendar year 1998; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-4039. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report of the Metals Initiative for fiscal year 1997; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-4040. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Summary of Expenditures of Rebates from the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Surcharge Escrow Account" for calendar year 1997; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-4041. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4042. A communication from the Board Members, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the 1999 annual report on the financial status of the railroad unemployment insurance system; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4043. A communication from the Board Members, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the actuarial status of the railroad retirement system dated June 1999; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4044. A communication from the Attorney for the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report of independent auditors for calendar year 1998; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-4045. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the Congressional Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-4046. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "VISAS: Documentation of Nonimmigrants Under the Immigration and Nationality Act, as Amended—Border Crossing Cards" (Public Notice 2976), received June 30, 1999; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4047. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, a report on the Investigation of U.S.-Origin Military Equipment in Cyprus and Azerbaijan; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.